

prosecutors, courts, probation and correctional officers, case management, coordination of criminal history records, and the juvenile justice system. Representative BILL MCCOLLUM introduced similar legislation in the House of Representatives as H.R. 4051. This legislation passed the House yesterday by a 358-60 vote margin.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this important initiative to collaborate with local efforts to prosecute and prevent the criminal use of guns in our schools and neighborhoods.

RAPE AND SEXUAL TORTURE IN SIERRA LEONE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in all too many places and in all too many conflicts in recent years we have witnessed the use of rape and sexual torture as instruments of war. I am sad to say, some incidence of rape has always accompanied war and turmoil in human history, but the record of the past few years, with the use of organized, systematic campaigns of rape to terrorize civilian populations, suggests a new chapter in the barbarity of human history has been opened.

It was disturbing to learn there are serious and credible allegations that rebel forces used systematic rape as an instrument of terror in the eight-year civil war in Sierra Leone.

While statistics are not yet available, there is clear and credible evidence that thousands of girls and women, ranging from ages 5 to 75, were abducted during the civil war and gang raped. Many were used as sex slaves and forced labor. And it is possible many are still being held captive, subject to the deprivations of their inhuman captors.

This horrific story was detailed in an article in yesterday's Washington Post. I ask unanimous consent to have the article, entitled "A War Against Women" from the April 11, 2000, Washington Post printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks.

The civilized world must send a strong, unambiguous message that rape and sexual torture are not acceptable under any circumstances and will not be tolerated. The United States must be at the forefront of efforts to help the Government of Sierra Leone bring to justice those responsible for the systematic rape and sexual torture that took place during the civil war.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 11, 2000]

A WAR AGAINST WOMEN—SIERRA LEONE
REBELS PRACTICED SYSTEMATIC SEXUAL
TERROR

(By Douglas Farah)

BLAMA CAMP, SIERRA LEONE—The women slip one at a time into a bamboo hut in this displaced persons camp, and most begin to cry quietly as they tell of being gang-raped and held as sex slaves by rebels who had sought to overthrow the government of Sierra Leone.

One 25-year-old woman said she had delivered a still-born baby the day before rebels of the Revolutionary United Front attacked her village in 1998. She was unable to flee

with most of the other villagers, and five rebels took turns raping her, she said. When her husband tried to intervene, they killed him.

"I thought at first I was dealing with human beings, so I said I was sad and confused because I had just delivered a dead baby, I was bloody and weak," she said between sobs. "But they were not human beings. After they left I gave up, and I wanted to die. I had no reason to live anymore."

Human rights workers says the woman, who was rescued by a patrol of government troops, is one of thousands who were raped by insurgent forces and other armed gangs during the nation's eight-year civil war. While statistics are not yet available, rights workers said the rebels' rape campaign was as widespread and systematic as similar assaults in the 1992-1995 Bosnian war but has received far less attention.

Unlike at least some of the perpetrators in Bosnia, those responsible here likely will never be tried because of a blanket amnesty that was part of the accord that ended the conflict last July. Even more worrisome, U.N. officials and government officials say, is that the rebels may still hold thousands of women in remote strongholds despite the fact that the peace accord required them to free all captive civilians.

"The [rebels] perpetrated systematic, organized and widespread sexual violence against girls and women," the New York-based group Human Rights Watch said in a recent report.

"The rebels planned and launched operations in which they rounded up girls and women, brought them to rebel command centers and then subjected them to individual and gang rape. Young girls under 17, and particularly those deemed to be virgins were specifically targeted. While some were released or managed to escape, hundreds continue to be held in sexual slavery after being 'married' to rebel combatants."

Rose Luz, a physician with the International Rescue Committee, said that what is most shocking about the hundreds of rape cases she is documenting is the ages of the victims. Most were under 14 or over 45—many of whom were too slow or too infirm to flee. Luz said the youngest victim documented so far was 5; the oldest was 75.

"It is the ones who could not get away," Luz said. "They raped whomever they stumbled across."

With the consent of the women involved, Rescue Committee officials arranged for a reporter to be present during some interviews. It was agreed that no names would be used or photographs taken. The interviews were conducted at this camp—about 160 miles southeast of the capital, Freetown—which shelters 22,500 people who were driven from their homes in eastern Sierra Leone by insurgent forces.

If the rebels considered a woman attractive or physically fit enough to work, she would likely be taken along with them—not just to be a sex slave, but a domestic servant as well, Luz and other aid workers said. Often, they said, a captive woman would try to attach herself to one leader to avoid repeated gang rape. In a culture in which rape victims are often ostracized, such wholesale assaults were effective not only in spreading terror, but in breaking apart communities, social workers said.

The first victims began telling their stories to the Rescue Committee when the aid group started reproductive health classes here several months ago, said counselor Dolly Williams. Last month, in an effort to refer the women for urgently needed medical attention and help them cope with their shame and humiliation, the Rescue Committee began documenting their stories. As word of the program spread, hundreds of

women have come forward, waiting their turn patiently while Williams and Luz record the accounts of other victims.

"Child and women abductees and victims of gender violence are far too numerous, and we do not yet even have a clear picture as to how many there really are," said U.S. Ambassador Joseph H. Melrose Jr., who is trying to arrange for U.S. funds to help the victims. "What is clear is that these victims and their injuries, both physical and psychological, must not be ignored. If these injuries do not heal, they will have implications for future generations of Sierra Leoneans and the success of the peace process."

Williams said the rate of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea among the women is extremely high, a reflection of the 92 percent infection rate found among demobilized rebels. Neither the combatants nor the women are tested for AIDS or HIV infection because the cost is too great and there are no resources to treat anyone who tests positive.

The first woman to arrive at the palm-thatched interview room one day last week was a 60-year-old who came to tell how she was grabbed in her village by a group of raiders because she was unable to outrun them. When they could not find any other women, she said, they raped her.

"I begged them not to," she said. I told them I was old. I could be their grandmother," but they did not listen; they just laughed at me. Afterward they let me go because I was old and useless. Now I have pain when I urinate. I have sores; I can't sleep."

A 35-year-old woman said she had been abducted and raped by four rebels in 1997. When they had finished, she said, they took her to their commander, who decided to keep her. She finally escaped three years later, during a firefight between the rebel unit and government troops.

"I can't have a man again," she told the interviewer. "I have lost my life."

CASH BALANCE PENSION PLANS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join Senators JEFFORDS, HARKIN and ROCKEFELLER in calling on the Senate to strengthen our Nation's pension laws. This amendment reaffirms the value of defined benefit pension plans for workers, and our commitment to protecting workers from age discrimination in the provision of pension benefits.

Too many American workers have discovered that the pension promises made to them by their employers are virtually worthless. It is disturbing in this period of unprecedented economic prosperity and rising profits that major corporations are shortchanging their older and longer serving workers. These companies have changed the rules unfairly, by converting traditional defined benefit pension plans to so-called "cash balance" plans.

Companies have made these conversions quietly, without informing workers of the impact of the changes on their retirement security. When workers ask for an explanation, all too often they are given devious responses. Some employers have done the right thing and allowed older and longer service workers to remain covered under the original plan, but other employers have not.

In addition, many cash balance plans deny benefits to older workers for a period of time after the conversion, using